

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1-16 and 21-23 were rejected, and Applicant earnestly requests reconsideration by the Examiner in light of the following comments. Claims 21-23 have been amended to clarify certain aspects of those claims, but those amendments are not believed to require a new search by the Examiner. The amendments are related to language in independent claims 1 and 14 for which a search was previously conducted by the Examiner. All claim amendments are fully supported throughout the written description and figures of the specification.

Claims 1-2, 7-12 and 14-15 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by the Breit reference, US Patent No.: 6,288,470. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Breit reference discloses a modular stator assembly 22 that includes a plurality of stator sections 32. However, the stator sections 32 must be assembled within a separate outer housing 24. Adjacent stator sections 32 are selectively plugged and unplugged from intermediate connectors 36, and retainers 40 abut each axially outlying connector to hold the modular stator sections within the separate outer housing 24. An exemplary retainer 40 is a snap ring 42 disposed in a groove 44 formed in the inside surface of the outer housing 24. (Column 2, line 47 – column 3, line 15)

Independent claims 1 and 14 as well as those claims that depend therefrom recite a different type of modular motor in which both the stator sections and outer housing sections are combined in modular units. Specifically, independent claim 1 recites "a plurality of stator sections, each stator section comprising an outer housing..." In other words, each stator section already includes its own outer housing rather than requiring the assembly of a plurality of stator sections within a separate outer housing as described in the Breit reference. Similarly, independent claim 14 recites "a plurality of modular motor sections, each motor section comprising a stator section and a housing section defining an outer surface of the submersible pumping system...." Each motor section comprises both a stator section and a housing section that defines an outer surface of the pumping system. The Breit reference does not disclose or

suggest such a system, but rather describes a separate outer housing into which stator sections must be assembled and held in place by retainers. Claims 2, 7-12 and 14-15 variously depend from independent claims 1 and 14 and are patentable for the reasons provided above with respect to the independent claims as well as for the unique subject matter recited in each dependent claim. Accordingly, the Breit reference does not support the rejection under 35 USC 102(b), and allowance of the claims is earnestly requested.

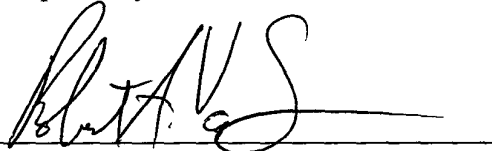
Claims 3-5 and 16 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the Breit reference in view of the Rivas reference, US Patent No.: 6,201,327. Applicants submit that in addition to the subject matter recited in each of the listed dependent claims, the dependent claims are patentable for the reasons provided above with respect to independent claims 1 and 14. The Rivas reference does not obviate the deficiencies of disclosure in the Breit reference. Accordingly, allowance of claims 3-5 and 16 is earnestly requested.

Claims 6, 13, 21 and 23 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the Breit reference in view of the Mech et al. reference, US Patent No.: 4,578,608. Claims 6 and 13 depend from independent claim 1 and are patentable for the reasons provided above with respect to claim 1, as well as for the specific subject matter recited in each of those claims. The Mech et al. reference does not obviate the deficiencies of disclosure in the Breit reference. With respect to claims 21 and 23, amendments have been made to the claims to reflect a plurality of "combined stator and outer housing sections" connected by threaded collar sections. The cited references, taken alone or in combination, do not disclose, teach or suggest connection of a plurality of combined stator and outer housing sections. Accordingly, independent claim 21 and dependent claim 23 also are patentable over the cited references.

Claim 22 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the Breit reference in view of the Mech et al. reference and a further in view of the Rivas reference. Claim 22 depends from independent claim 21 and is patentable for the reasons provided above with respect to amended independent claim 21. The additional Rivas reference does not obviate the deficiencies of disclosure in the other cited references. Accordingly, claim 22 also is patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

In view of the foregoing remarks, the pending claims are believed patentable over the cited references. However, if the Examiner believes certain amendments are necessary to clarify the present claims or if the Examiner wishes to resolve other issues by way of a telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. A. Van Someren', written over a horizontal line.

Robert A. Van Someren
Reg. No. 36,038

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PO Box 2107
Cypress, TX 77410-2107
Voice: (281) 373-4369